

Ann Harker
MONMOUTHSHIRE. *9 1793.†*

Monmouth
Sept 2.
DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNTS

OF

PERSFIELD
AND
CHEPSTOW,

INCLUDING

CAERWENT, AND THE PASSAGES;

ALSO,

THE ROAD TO BRISTOL AND GLOCESTER:

INTERSPERSED WITH

LOCAL AND INTERESTING PARTICULARS:

SELECTED FROM THE MOST ADMIRABLE WRITERS, VIZ.

YOUNG, WYNDHAM, WHEATLEY, SHAW,
GROSE, &c.

BEING THE CONTINUATION OF A DESIGN

FOR PUBLISHING IN LIKE MANNER,

An Account of the most Interesting Places in the County,

BY CHARLES HEATH,

PRINTER, MONMOUTH.

" PERSFIELD is a Place full of Wonders, and will yield you amazing
Entertainment." ARTHUR YOUNG

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SOLD BY HIM IN THE MARKET PLACE, AND AT ALL THE INNS IN THE  
COUNTY. 1793.

NOT MOUNTED

1799

DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT  
OF  
PERSIFIED  
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## INTRODUCTION.

**T**HE scenes at PERSFIELD have been examined by men of such distinguished taste, and the various beauties, with which the place is surrounded, pointed out by them with such ability, that in their description the Stranger will find every feature noticed deserving of his attention.

No part of the kingdom has been more the object of general curiosity, nor seen with greater pleasure, than this we are now speaking of; for the grandeur and variety which here present themselves, are peculiar to this place.

The ingenious Mr. VALENTINE MORRIS, to whom PERSFIELD is so much indebted for its present decoration, gave every assistance which Art could add to Nature so adorned: but, as Mr. GILPIN justly observes, "little was left for him but to open walks and views, thro' the woods, to the various objects around them, which  
" he

## INTRODUCTION.

"he hath shewn, under different forms, to great  
"advantage."

That he—whose taste improved the scene, and whose politeness and hospitality so greatly enhanced the pleasure to the Traveller of viewing it—should during life have continued the Possessor of so charming a residence, every generous heart will naturally wish;—but, from a liberality too great for his circumstances, he was doom'd to make atonement by a long confinement in the King's Bench.

Surely every feeling mind will regret his reverse of fortune; on reading the following paragraph, which is copied from a publication of last October:

THE Chepstow Hunt was to begin on the 22d.

"Mr. SMITH, President. This gentleman succeeded  
"poor VAL. MORRIS, at PERSFIELD, whom Shenstone,  
"among a thousand other people, envied—whom poor  
"old Thicknesse, more sinned against than sinning,  
"relieved!—and whom some of his nearest rich rela-  
"tions left desolate, and sent him nothing but an inju-  
"rious dole of broken victuals when his high heart was  
"breaking!—and in the King's bench-prison; he who  
"communicates this article, saw him taking in A PETTY  
"MEASURE OF MILK IN A BROWN PAN!"

By the kind Permission of Mr. Smith, these Walks at present  
are to be seen every Day.

PERSFIELD.



## PERSFIELD.

EXTRACTED FROM

ARTHUR YOUNG'S

*"Six Weeks Tour through the Southern Counties  
of England and Wales."*

**I**F your purpose is seeing PERSFIELD, you go from Chepstow up the Monmouth road (unless you go by water, which is a pleasant scheme enough), and pass directly to the house.\*

\* This Work being published in 1772, while the estate was in Mr. MORRIS'S possession, considerable alterations have been made in the walks by Mr. SMITH, since that time.

We were shewn to an adjoining part of the garden, which consisted of slopes and waving lawns, having shrubby trees scattered about them with great taste, and striking down a short walk to the left, came at once to a little sequestered spot, shaded by a fine beach tree, which commands a landscape, too beautiful for pencil to paint.

This little spot, over which the beach tree spreads, is levelled in the vast rock, which forms the shore of the river W Y E, through these grounds: this rock, which is totally covered with a shrubby underwood, is almost perpendicular from the water to the rail that encloses the point of view. One of the sweetest vallies ever beheld lies immediately beneath, but at such a depth, that every object is diminished, and appears in miniature. This valley consists of a complete farm, of about forty inclosures, grass and corn fields, intersected by hedges, with many trees; it is a peninsula almost surrounded by the river, which winds directly beneath, in a manner wonderfully romantic; and what makes the whole picture perfect, is its being entirely surrounded by vast rocks and precipices, covered thick with wood down to the very water's edge. The whole is an amphitheatre,

theatre, which seems dropt from the clouds, complete in all its beauty.

From thence we turned to the left, through a winding walk cut out of the rock ; but with wood enough against the river to prevent the horrors which would otherwise attend the treading on such a precipice : after passing through a hay-field, the contrast to the preceding views, we entered the woods again, and came to a bench enclosed with Chinese rails in the rock, which commands the same valley and river, all fringed with wood ; some great rocks in front ; and just above them the river Severn appears, with a boundless prospect beyond it.

A little further, we meet with another bench, inclosed with iron rails, on a point of the rock which is here pendent over the river, and may be truly called a situation full of the terrible sublime : you look immediately down upon a vast hollow of wood, all surrounded by the woody precipices which have so fine an effect from all the points of view at PERSFIELD ; in the midst appears a small, but neat building, the bathing-house, which though none of the least, appears from this enormous height, but as a spot of white, in the midst

of the vast range of green: towards the right is seen the winding of the river,

From this spot, which seems to be pushed forward from the rock by the bold hands of the Genius of the Place, you proceed to the temple, a small neat building on the highest part of these grounds; and imagination cannot form an idea of any thing more beautiful than what appears full to the sight from this amazing point of view. You look down upon all the woody precipices, as if in another region, terminated by a wall of rocks: just above them appears the river Severn in so peculiar a manner, that you would swear it washed them, and that nothing parted you from it but those rocks, which are in reality four or five miles distant. This deception is the most exquisite I ever beheld, for viewing, first the river beneath, then the vast rocks rising in a shore of precipices, and immediately above them the noble river, as if a part of the little world immediately before you: and lastly, all the boundless prospect over Gloucestershire and Somersetshire, are, together, such a bewitching view, that nothing can exceed it, and contains more romantic variety, with such an apparent junction of separate parts, that imagination

nation can scarcely conceive any thing equal to the amazing reality. The view to the right, over the park, and the winding valley at the bottom of it, would, from any other spot but this, be thought remarkable fine.

The winding road down to the cold bath, is cool, sequestered, and agreeable. The building itself is excessively neat, and well contrived, and the spring which supplies it, plentiful and transparent. You wind from it up the rock; but here, I must be allowed just to hint a want, if any thing can be wanted in such a spot as PERSFIELD. This walk from the cold bath, is dark and rather gloomy, breaks and objects are rather scarce in it; the trickling stream you have just left, puts one in mind of a cascade, which would be here truly beautiful, but does not appear throughout all the walks of PERSFIELD. On the left towards the valley, there is a prodigious hollow filled with a thick wood, which almost hangs beneath you; from the walk, an opening down through this wood, might easily be made, with just light enough let in, to shew to advantage the gush of a cascade; to look backwards, astant upon such an object, would be infinitely picturesque, amidst

amidst the brownness of this hanging grove. I know not whether water could be brought there; but if it could, never was there a situation for viewing it to such advantage.

Passing on, there are two breaks, which open to the valley in a very agreeable manner. You are then led through an extremely romantic cave, hollowed out of the rock, and opening to a fine point of view. At the mouth of this cave some swivel guns are planted; the firing of which occasions a repeated echo from rock to rock in a most surprising manner. Nor must you pass without observing a remarkable phenomenon, a large oak, of a great age, growing out of a cleft of the rock, without the least appearance of any earth. Pursuing the walk, as it rises up the rocks, and passes by the point of view first mentioned, you arrive at a bench, which commands a view delicious beyond all imagination: on the left you look down upon the valley, with the river winding many hundred fathom perpendicular beneath, the whole surrounded by the vast amphitheatre of wooded rocks; and to the right full upon the town of Chepstow; beyond it the Severn's windings, and a prodigious prospect bounding the whole.

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## PERSFIELD.

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Whenever you come to PERSFIELD, rest yourself some time at this bench, for, believe me, it is a capital view.

From thence an agreeable walk, shaded on one side with a great number of very fine spruce firs, leads you to an irregular junction of winding walks, with many large trees growing from the sequestered lawn, in a pleasing manner, and figures by contrast to what presently succeeds; which is a view, at the very idea of which, my pen drops from my hand. The eyes of your imagination are not keen enough to take in this point, which the united talents of a *Claude* and a *Poussin* would scarcely be able to sketch. Full to the left, appears beneath you, the valley, in all its beauty, surrounded by the rocky woods; which might be called (to use another's expression), a coarse salvage of canvass around a fine piece of lawn. In the front, rises from the hollow of the river, a prodigious wall of formidable rocks, and immediately above them, in breaks, winds the Severn, as if parted from you only by them. On the right is seen the town and castle, amidst a border of wood, with the Severn above them; and over the whole, as far as the eye can command, an immense prospect

pect of distant country. I leave your imagination to give the colours to this mere outline, which is all I can attempt.

The sloping walk of evergreens, which leads from hence, is remarkably beautiful in prospect; for the town and country above it appear perpetually varying as you move; each moment presenting a fresh picture, till the whole is lost by descending. You next meet with the grotto, a point of view exquisitely beautiful; it is a small cave in the rock, stuck with stones of various kinds; copper, and iron cinders, &c. You look from the seat in it immediately down a steep slope on to a hollow of wood, bounded in front by the craggy rocks, which seem to part you from the Severn in breaks; with the distant country, spotted with white buildings above all; forming a landscape as truly picturesque as any in the world.

The winding walk, which leads from the grotto, varies from any of the former; for the town of Chepstow, and the various neighbouring objects, break through the hedge, as you pass along, in a manner very beautiful: passing over a little bridge which is thrown across a road in a hollow way  
through

through the wood, you come to an opening upon a scoop of wood alone, which being different from the rest, pleases as well by its novelty, as its romantic variety. Further on, from the same walk, are two other breaks which let in rural pictures; the latter opens to a hollow of wood, bounded by the wall of rocks, one way, and letting in a view of the town another, in an exquisite taste. The next opening in the hedge (I should tell you, by the way, that these breaks and openings are all *natural*, none *stiffly artificial*), gives you at one small view, all the picturesque beauties of a natural *camera obscura*; a bench which is thickly shaded with trees, in a dark sequestered spot, from which you look aside through the opening to a landscape, which seems formed by the happiest hand of design, it is really nothing but catching a view of accidental objects. The town and castle of Chepstow appear, from one part, rising from romantic steepes of wood, in a manner too beautiful to express; a small remove discovers the steeple, so dropt in the precise point of taste, that one can scarcely believe it real, and not an eye-trap. Soon after a large break opens a various view of the distant country; and not far from it another, which is much worthy of remark; you look down upon a fine bend

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of the river, winding to the castle, which appears here romantically situated; the opposite bank is a swelling hill, part overrun with gorse and rubbish, and part cultivated inclosures: this difference in the same object, is here attended with emotions not consonant; the wild part of the hill suits the rest of the view, and agrees with it in the sensations it raises, but the cultivated part being incomplete, and unlike the beautiful farm, at the bottom of the before-mentioned amphitheatre, which is entire, has a bad effect. Was the whole well cultivated and lively, being rather distinct from the rest of the landscape, it would have a much better effect.

The last point, and which perhaps is equal to most of the preceding, is the alcove. From this you look down perpendicularly on the river, with a cultivated slope on the other side. To the right is a prodigious steep shore of wood, winding to the castle, which, with a part of the town, appears in full view. On the left is seen a fine bend of the river for some distance, the opposite shore of wild wood, with the rock appearing at places in rising cliffs, and further on to the termination of the view that way, the vast wall of rocks

so often mentioned, which are here seen in length, and have a stupendous effect.\* On the whole, this scene is striking.

About a mile beyond these walks is a very romantic cliff, called the Wind Cliff,† from which the extent of prospect is prodigious; but it is most remarkable for the surprising echo, on firing a pistol or gun from it. The explosion is repeated five times very distinctly from rock to rock, often seven; and if the calmness of the weather happens to be remarkably favourable, nine times. This echo is curious. Beyond the cliff, at 3 miles distance, is TINTERN ABBEY,‡ a venerable ruin,

\* In this range of rock, are twelve large projections over the river, like bastions, which the country people have dignified with the names of the TWELVE APOSTLES; and a thirteenth, standing in the same row, having a slender stone upon the summit of it, about five feet in height, they denominate SAINT PETER'S THUMB.

† The rivers Severn and Wye; the towns and castles of Chepstow, Thornbury, and Berkley; the several counties of Brecon and Glamorgan, in Wales; Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Somersetshire, and Devonshire, in England, are contained in this prospect; esteemed one of the most extensive and beautiful inland views in the kingdom.

‡ A Description of which (on the plan of this work), may be had of Mr. GETHEN, Tintern; and Mr. GEORGE, the BEAUFORT ARMS INN, Chepstow; also of Mr. Watkins, Beaufort Arms, MONMOUTH.

situated in a romantic hollow, belonging to the Duke of BEAUFORT, well worth your seeing; and this is the end of the PERSFIELD entertainment.

Upon the whole, it exceeds any thing of the kind I have seen. In point of striking picturesque views, in the romantic stile, PERSFIELD is exquisite. The cultivated inclosures, forming the bottom of the valley, with the river winding round them, and the vast amphitheatre of rocks and pendent woods which wall it in, to such a stupendous height, is the capital beauty of the place, and the owner has fixed his benches, &c. in those points of view which command it in the happiest manner, with the utmost taste: Nothing can be more truly picturesque than the appearance which the Severn takes in many places, of being supported and bounded by the wall of rocks, though four miles distant; this effect is beyond all imagination striking. In respect to the extensive prospects, the agreeable manner in which the town, castle, and steeple are caught, with the rocks, woods, and river, taken in themselves, other places are equal; but when they unite to form the landscapes I have just mentioned, I believe they never were equalled.

Throughout

Throughout the whole of these walks, it is evident that Mr. MORRIS meant them merely as an assistance to view the beauties of Nature; as a means of seeing what Nature had already done to his hands, and without a strong design of decoration or ornament. Every thing is in a just taste; but as I have been particular in speaking of all the beauties of PERSFIELD, I must be allowed to hint a few circumstances wanting to render it complete. But do not imagine I mean in the least to disapprove the taste of the ingenious owner; by no means; I am not certain that it would be possible to add what I am going to mention; but I minute them merely that your idea of PERSFIELD may be exact; and that you may not mistake any general exceptions I have made use of, to imply beauties which are not here.

The river WYE, which runs at the bottom of the walks, is an infinite advantage; but it is by many degrees inferior in beauty to a fresh water one, which keeps a level, and does not display a breadth of muddy bank at low water; and the colour is very bad; it has not that transparent darkness, that silver-shaded surface, which is, of itself, one of the greatest beauties in Nature, and  
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would give a lustre inexpressibly elegant among these romantic objects.

CASCADES are likewise much wanting. In such steepes of wood, and embrowning hollows, that have a pleasing solemnity, nothing has so glorious an effect, as breaking unexpectedly upon a cascade, gushing from rocks, and over-hung with wood. There are many spots in the PERSFIELD hollows, which would point out in the strongest manner the beauty of such objects.

Lastly, There is a want of *contrasts*; for the general emotions which arise on viewing the rocks, hanging woods, and deep precipices of PERSFIELD, are all those of the *sublime*: and when that is the case, *the beautiful* never appears in such bewitching colours, as those it receives from contrast: to turn suddenly from one of these romantic walks, and break full upon a beautiful landscape, without any intermixture of rocks, distant prospect, or any object that was *great* or *terrible*, but on the contrary, *lively* and *agreeable*, would be a vast improvement here; and I venture the remark the rather, because those views at PERSFIELD, which are beautiful, are all intermixed with the sublime:  
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the farm beneath you is superlatively so; but the precipice you look down from, the hanging woods, and the rocks, are totally different. The small break, however, through the hedge, which catches the town and steeple, is in this taste; but even here, some large rocks appear.

Small elegant buildings, in a light and airy taste, rising from green and gently swelling slopes, with something moving near them, and situated so as the sun may shine full upon them, viewed suddenly from a dark romantic walk, have a charming effect. But it must strike every one who walks over PERSFIELD, that *the finest seats, &c. are seen rather too much before you step into them; they do not break upon you unexpectedly enough*: in many of them you see the rails, which enclose them on the brink of the precipice, at a small distance before you enter. What an effect would the view from the Grotto, for instance, have, if you entered it from behind, through a dark zig-zag narrow walk!

Excuse these hints, which I throw out with great reluctance; for PERSFIELD, notwithstanding these trifles, is a place full of wonders, and will yield you amazing entertainment.

[THUS FAR MR. YOUNG.]

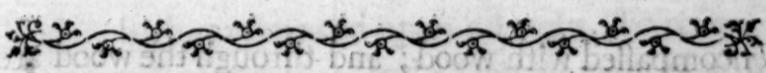
the farm beneath you is comparatively so; but the precipice you look down from, the hanging woods, and the rocks, are totally different. The small brook, however, through the hedge, which catches the town and steep, is in this taste; but even here, some large rocks appear.

## TO THE READER.

Mr. YOUNG's Tour, from which the preceding account is extracted, being scarce and out of print, it was not procured till after the rest of the work was put to press. It is not of any consequence as to the place it occupies, but it is necessary to remark it, to account for the duplicate of pages which follow it.

C. HEATH.

PERSFIELD



PERSFIELD.

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EXTRACTED FROM  
WHEATLEY'S

*"Observations on Modern Gardening."*

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PERSFIELD is not a large place: the park contains about three hundred acres; and the house stands in the midst of it. On the side of the approach, the inequalities of the ground are gentle, and the plantations pretty; but nothing there is great: on the other side a beautiful lawn falls precipitately every way into a deep vale, which shelves down the middle; the declivities are diversified with clumps and with groves; and a number of large trees straggle along the bottom. This lawn is

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encompassed with wood; and through the wood are walks, which open beyond it upon those romantic scenes which surround the park, and which are the glory of PERSFIELD. The WYE runs immediately below the wood; the river is of a dirty colour; but the shape of its course is very various; winding first in the form of an horse-shoe, then proceeding in a large sweep to the town of Chepstow, and afterwards to the Severn. The banks are high hills; in different places steep, bulging out, or hollow on the sides; rounded, flattened, or irregular at top; and covered with wood, or broken by rocks. They are sometimes seen in front; sometimes in perspective; falling back for the passage, or closing behind the bend of the river; appearing to meet, rising above, or shooting out beyond one another. The wood which encloses the lawn crowns an extensive range of these hills, which overlook all those on the opposite shore, with the country which appears above or between them; and winding themselves as the river winds, their sides, all rich and beautiful, are alternately exhibited; and the point of view in one spot becomes an object to the next.

In many places the principal feature is a continued rock, in length a quarter of a mile, perpendicular,

dicular, high, and placed upon a height. To resemble ruins is common to rocks; but no ruin of any single structure was ever equal to this enormous pile: it seems to be the remains of a city; and other smaller heaps scattered about it, appear to be fainter traces of the former extent, and strengthen the similitude.

It stretches along the brow which terminates the forest of Dean; the face of it is composed of immense blocks of stone, but not rugged; the top is bare and uneven, but not craggy; and from the foot of it, a declivity, covered with thicket, slopes gently towards the Wye, but in one part is abruptly broken off by a ledge of less rocks, of a different hue, and in a different direction. From the grotto it seems to rise immediately over a thick wood, which extends down a hill below the point of view, across the valley through which the Wye flows, and up the opposite banks, hides the river, and continues without interruption to the bottom of the rock; from another seat it is seen by itself without even its base; it faces another, with all its appendages about it; and sometimes the sight of it is partially intercepted by trees, beyond which, at a distance, its long line continues on through all the openings between them.

Another capital object is  
**THE CASTLE OF CHEPSTOW,**  
a noble ruin, of great extent; advanced to the very edge of a perpendicular rock, and so immediately rivetted into it, that from the top of the battlements down to the river seems but one precipice: the same ivy which overspreads the face of the one, twines and clusters among the fragments of the other; many towers, much of the walls, and large remains of the chapel are standing. Close to it is a most romantic wooden bridge, very ancient, very grotesque, at an extraordinary height above the river, and seeming to abut against the ruins at one end, and some rocky hills at the other. The castle is so near to the alcove at PERSFIELD, that little circumstances in it may be discerned; from other spots more distant, even from the lawn, and from a shubbery on the side of the lawn, it is distinctly visible, and always beautiful, whether it is seen alone, or with the bridge, with the town, with more or with less of the rich meadows which lie along the banks of the Wye, to its junction three miles off with the Severn. A long sweep of that river also, its red cliffs, and the fine rising country in the counties of Somerset and Gloucester, generally terminate the prospect.

Most

Most of the hills about PERSFIELD are full of rocks; some are intermixed with hanging woods, and either advance a little before them, or retire within them, and are backed, or overhung, or separated by trees. In the walk to the cave, a long succession of them is frequently seen in perspective, all of a dark colour, and with wood in the intervals between them. In other parts, the rocks are more wild and uncouth; and sometimes they stand on the tops of the highest hills; at other times down as low as the river; they are home objects in one spot; and appear only in the background of another.

The woods concur with the rocks to render the scenes of PERSFIELD romantic; the place every where abounds with them; they cover the tops of the hills; they hang on the steeps; or they fill the depths of the vallies. In one place they front, in another they rise above, in another they sink below the point of view; they are seen sometimes retiring beyond each other, and darkening as they recede; and sometimes an opening between two is closed by a third at a distance beyond them. A point, called the LOVER's LEAP, commands a continued surface of the thickest foliage, which  
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overspreads a vast hollow immediately underneath.

Below the Chinese seat, the course of the Wye is in the shape of a horse-shoe; it is on one side enclosed by a semi-circular hanging wood; the direct steep of a table-hill shut it in on the other; and the great rock fills the interval between them: in the midst of this rude scene lies the peninsula formed by the river, a mile at least in length, and in the highest state of cultivation: near the isthmus the ground rises considerably, and thence descends in a broken surface, till it flattens to the water's edge at the other extremity. The whole is divided into corn-fields and pastures; they are separated by hedge-rows, coppices, and thickets; open clumps and single trees stand out in the meadows; and houses and other buildings, which belong to the farms, are scattered amongst them: Nature so cultivated, surrounded by Nature so wild, compose a most lovely landscape together.

The communications between these several points are generally by close walks; but the covert ends near the Chinese seat; and a path is afterwards conducted through the upper park to a rustic temple,

temple, which over-looks on one side some of the romantic views which have been described, and on the other the cultivated hills and rich valleys of Monmouthshire. To the rude and magnificent scenes of nature now succeeds a pleasant, fertile, and beautiful country, divided into enclosures, not covered with woods, nor broken by rocks and precipices, but only varied by easy swells and gentle declivities, yet the prospect is not tame; the hills in it are high; and it is bounded by a vast sweep of the Severn, which is here visible for many miles together, and receives in its course the Wye and the Avon.

From the temple a road leads to the Windcliff, an eminence much above the rest, and commanding the whole in one view. The Wye runs at the foot of the hill; the peninsula lies just below; the deep bosom of the semi-circular hanging wood is full in sight; over part of it the great rock appears; all its base, all its accompaniments are seen; the country immediately beyond it is full of lovely hillocks; and the higher grounds in the counties of Somerset and Gloucester rise in the horizon. The Severn seems to be, as it really is above Chepstow, three or four miles wide: below the town it  
spreads

spreads almost to a sea; the county of Monmouth is there the hither shore; and between its beautiful hills appear, at a great distance, the mountains of Brecknock and Glamorganshires. In extent, in variety, and grandeur, few prospects are equal to this. It comprehends all the noble scenes of PERSFIELD, encompassed by some of the finest country in Britain.

How also varied by easy well-precipitous, but only varied by easy well-precipitous, yet the prospect is not tame; the hills in it are high, and it is bounded by a vast sweep of the Severn, which is here visible for many miles together, and receives in its course the Wyre and the Avon.

[THUS FAR MR. WHEATLEY.] From this eminence much above the rest, and commanding the whole in one view. The Wyre runs at the foot of the hill; the peninsula lies just below; the deep bottom of the semi-circular hanging wood is full in sight; over part of it the great rock appears; all its base, all its accompaniments are there; the country immediately beyond it is full of lovely hills; and the higher grounds in the counties of Somerset and Gloucester rise in the horizon. The Severn seems to be as it really is above Challow, three or four miles wide; below the town it spreads



**PERSFIELD**  
**AND**  
**CHEPSTOW.**

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EXTRACTED FROM

**SHAW'S**

*"Tour to the West of England."*

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WHEN we left TINTERN ABBEY, after a difficult access, thro' a narrow and rough lane, to the summit of the hill which leads to CHEPSTOW, the contrast was most wonderful; from the narrow confines of the wildest dell, and the secluded haunts of monastic solitude, to the vast expanse that here bursts upon our view: towns, villages, seats and woody lawns, with the noble Severn rolling to the ocean, and those islands called the Holmes, are the objects of this sublime scenery:

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Between

Between this and Chepstow stands PERSFIELD, famous for the much admired walks of the ingenious Mr. MORRIS, which we now visited. This place originally belonged to the Rous's; was bought by Mr MORRIS, and beautified most consonant to the natural endowments of rock and water. He enjoyed it till within these few years, most hospitably inviting all company to partake of its inimitable delights.

Since Mr. SMITH has occupied the place, the pleasure grounds have been kept up in the same elegant taste, and the public indulged with the gratification of seeing them, as when they belonged to Mr. MORRIS.

Many pleasing additions have been made, which not only shew the views to greater advantage, but some of the serpentines, which rendered the walk too long, have been thrown into strait lines, for the accommodation of visitors.

The first view we had after entering this scenery of enchantment, was a pleasing sight of CHEPSTOW CASTLE, cliffs, &c. Also LANCOT cliffs, and the broad Severn beyond. The next opening we beheld a wonderful dip of 500 feet perpendicular into the

the WYE, whose waters were not so agreeable and lucid as above, where the briny waves of ocean had not adulterated them. We next came to a sweet point called the Pleasant View, truly descriptive of its name. Next from a bench, LANCOT woods and rocks were most majestic and fine, the river winding nobly underneath; opposite the cave are bow railings with a seat, which if we compare the works of nature with those of art, may be called a front box of one of the compleatest theatres in the universe; the whole appears from hence a perfect circular theatre, marked out by the surrounding wood-fringed cliffs. Here wants no painted canvass to express its scenery, nature's sweet landscape is quite enough, and instead of an artificial sky depicted over our heads, the blue vault of heaven hangs sublime and lovely. Returning from this, we ascended on a path above the cave which leads to a similar box to the one described, that is called the Lover's Leap. Having taken a final view of the scenery from this tremendous precipice, we were conducted to the corner of the adjacent field, where stands the Temple, commanding a most glorious prospect in an opposite direction; the conflux of the Wye and Severn, the Bristol Channel opening into the main sea, the

smoke of that great city on the opposite shores, interspersed with snow-white houses, &c. while the reflection of the setting sun gilded their windows, that shone like real fires; these, together with other distant prospects of stupendous hills on the Welch coast, the abrupt rocks, immense woods, and all the softer beauties of improvement, conspire to render PERSFIELD a scene that fills the breast with delight and admiration above all others.

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### CHEPSTOW.

CHEPSTOW is a Saxon name, and signifies a market, or place of trading; in British it is called Kaswent, or Castell-Gwent. It is a place of no great antiquity, and many affirm that it had its origin not many ages past, from the ancient city Venta, which flourished about four miles from hence, in the time of Antoninus, who calls it Venta Silurum. Which name (says Camden) neither arms nor time has been able to consume; for  
at

at this day it is called CAERWENT, or the city Venta. But the city itself is so much destroyed, that it only appears to have once been, from the ruinous walls, chequered pavements, and Roman coins.

About two miles below is the famous passage over the Severn at BEACHLEY to AUST, on the opposite shore. AUST was formerly called AUST-CLIVE, from its situation on a high craggy cliff. At this place happened once as strong an instance of Wisdom triumphing over Folly, as the annals of history can produce. Walter Mapes who wrote five hundred years before Camden, thus describes it: "EDWARD the elder, lying at AUST-CLIVE, and LEOLIN Prince of Wales at BETHESLEY, or BEACHLEY, when the latter would neither come down to a conference, nor cross the Severn, EDWARD passed over to LEOLIN; who seeing the King, and knowing who he was, threw his royal robes upon the ground (which he had prepared to sit in judgment with), and leaped into the water breast high, and embracing the boat, said, "Most wise King, your humility has conquered my pride, and your wisdom triumphed over my folly; mount upon that neck which I have foolishly exalted against you, so shall

shall you enter into that country, which your goodness hath at this day made your own," and so taking him upon his shoulders, he made him sit upon his robes, and joining hands did homage to him."

CHEPSTOW is a neat little port, for most of the places on this river, where their commerce seems to center; the tide is very high and impetuous, rising, I suppose, greatly beyond any other in the kingdom, commonly about forty feet at the bridge, which tho' built of timber looks noble, being 70 feet from the surface of the water; in January 1738, we were told the water rose considerably above this height, which did very great damages to this and the neighbouring country. Half the bridge is in Gloucestershire, so that it is supported at the expence of both counties. The town is situated on a sweet declivity facing the wide expanse of the Severn. We retired to rest, the room was backward, and the window unguarded by a curtain looked that way.

At earliest twilight of the morn I woke,  
And from my pillow saw the God of "day  
Stand tiptoe on the eastern mountain tops,"  
While in the air dim mists and vapours hung,

Cloathing

## CHEPSTOW.

45

Cloathing the distant hills and winding vales.  
 Upon the gentle radiance of his face  
 My ravish'd eyes with ease and pleasure dwelt.  
 But soon his cheeks display'd a brighter glow;  
 His kindling beams by gradual ascent  
 Gain'd double vigour. Now the airy troops  
 Perciev'd the glittering rays, like pointed spears  
 Darting from heav'n to earth, and instant fled.  
 No longer could one view, with eye direct,  
 The dazzling glories of his mighty sphere.  
 The radiant day seem'd conscious of its God;  
 All nature smil'd; the rosy tribe of fruits,  
 Bending their parent trees to kiss the ground,  
 Imbib'd the genial warmth; pleas'd VAGA pour'd  
 His sea-green streams deep murmuring beneath  
 The hanging bowers and glittering rocks; while wide  
 The rougher Severn stretch'd his arm bestrew'd  
 With shining sails, to the capacious ocean.  
 Thus lost in admiration's magic charms,  
 I gladly caught that fleeting precious time,  
 "The cool, the fragrant, and the peaceful hour,  
 "To meditation due and sacred song,"  
 Which others sacrifice in fond embrace  
 Of downy slumbers, soporific death,  
 And paid my tribute due to that great Source,  
 Who thus illum'd the world, and, the past eve,  
 Had grac'd with all the splendor of his beams,  
 The full luxuriance of fair PERSFIELD'S scene,  
 The curious traveller's wonder and delight!

After breakfast we visited the ruins of this magnificent castle, boldly placed upon a huge rock washed by the WYE; the whole looks of lasting solidity, and is made beautifully picturesque by the numberless evergreens, &c. that hang about its walls. It was rebuilt about 580 years since, by Gilbert Earl of Pembroke. This Gilbert, surnamed Strongbow, second son of Gilbert de Clare, having solicited Henry I. to bestow on him lands in Wales, had committed to him the van of the army, when that king threatened to destroy all North Wales and Powisland, and possessing the whole dominion of Striguil (now CHEPSTOW), was made Earl of Pembroke by King Stephen, 1138. His son Earl Richard left a daughter, his heiress, who carried these estates, with the Earldom, to William Marshall, whose five sons enjoyed this honor successively, and all died without issue. Of the two last the former died at Gooderich Castle 1246; the latter at Striguil Castle soon after. The sister and coheir married Hugh Bigod, Earl of Norfolk.

Sir William Herbert, Knt. a faithful adherent to Edward IV. having reduced divers castles, forts, and towns in Wales, of Henry Duke of Exeter,

Jasper

Jasper Earl of Pembroke, and James Earl of Wiltshire, to obedience, had a grant of their estates, amongst which was much that belonged to the ancient earls of Pembroke, in consequence of which he was created Earl by that title. He died possessed of the castle of CHEPSTOW and other large possessions hereabouts. All these with the Barony of Herbert, of Chepstow, Ragland, and Gower, the daughter and heir of his son, carried to Charles Somerset, (a son of HENRY BEAUFORT, third Duke of Somerset), created afterwards Earl of Worcester, from whom they have descended to the present Duke. But this has been many years under a lease of lives, and the elderly person who shews it is the last; she was born here, where she still resides in comfortable apartments, and makes a good subsistence by the fruits of the garden, peaches, &c. which are plentiful on these warm walls when other places fail. In one of the towers we saw a room, where Harry Martin, one of the twelve judges who sat to condemn Charles I. was afterwards confined for 27 years, and then died there. From the leads above, we had an extensive and fine view.

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*Mr. Shaw having here introduced Chepstow Castle, we presume the account at large, extracted from*

**GROSE'S  
ANTIQUITIES OF ENGLAND AND WALES,**

*Will be more acceptable to the Reader.*

THE Castle of Chepstow stands on a high rock; washed by the river Wye, near its influx into the Severn, over which there is a wooden bridge 70 feet high.

Its area, or site, is said to occupy five acres of ground. It consists of three courts: the second is converted into a kitchen garden. Here are several buildings, particularly the Chapel, which was once very large and much ornamented; it was three stories high, as is evident from the marks of the joists and floors, and in the uppermost are the remains of a fire-place. Within the chapel also are  
twelve

twelve large niches, with semicircular arches over them, formed in the walls. Their seats were chair high above the floor of the room. The use of them is not very apparent, unless we might be permitted to imagine, that they were intended for the twelve Norman adventurers, who might probably do their *first* services in this castle, for the lands which they had newly conquered in Glamorganshire.

Great attention seems to have been bestowed in fortifying the entrance, which lies through two lofty towers on the east side; for besides a strong latticed door, the crossings of which are fastened with iron bolts within, and covered with iron plates, on the outside there was a port-cullis, whose groove is still to be seen, and two large round funnels in the top of the arch, for pouring down melted lead or scalding water, and also a machicolated or projecting arch beyond all, and a chink on a small projection on the south side of the gate, at about the height of a man.

The castle seems to have been built at the same time with the town, to which it was a kind of citadel, but by whom, or when, neither Leland, Camden, nor any of the topographical writers

mention. Stowe, indeed, in his Annals, attributes the building of the Castle to Julius Cæsar, a supposition too glaringly absurd to merit serious confutation. Probably it was built by some of the earls of Pembroke. Camden thinks it of no great antiquity; "for several affirm, says he, and not without reason, that it had its rise not many ages past from the ancient Venta, which flourished about four miles from hence, in the time of Antoninus, who calls it Venta Silurum, as if it was their chief city, which neither arms nor time have been able to consume; for at this day it is called Kaer-went or the city of Venta." But the city itself is so much destroyed by the one or the other, that it only appears to have once been, from the ruinous walls, the chequered pavements, and the Roman coins.

LELAND, in his Itinerary, thus describes it: "The towne of Chepstowe hath bene very strongly waulled; as yet doth appere. The waulles began at the ende of the great bridge over Wye, and so came to the castle, the which yet standeth fayr and strong, not far from the ruin of the bridge. In the castle ys one tower, as I herd say, be the name of Longine. The town hath now but one  
parochie

parochie chirche: the cell of a blake monke or or two of Bermundsey near London was lately there suppressed; a great part of cumpace withyn the wauls is now converted to little meadowes and gardens."

This place formerly belonged to the CLARES, earls of Pembroke, who were likewise called earls of Strighul, from a neighbouring castle of that name, wherein they dwelt. The last of these, Richard, furnamed Strongbow, on account of his skill in archery, was the first who gained a footing of the English in Ireland; by his daughter it devolved to the Bigots, and is now by descent the property of the Duke of BEAUFORT.

In the troubles under Charles I. this town and castle were garrisoned for the king, and, according to Rushworth, in October 6, 1645, Colonel Morgan, governor of Gloucester, at the head of three hundred horse, and four hundred foot, and assisted by the Monmouthshire men, with little difficulty made himself master of the town, and then sent the following summons to Colonel Fitzmorris, an Irishman, governor of the castle.

" SIR,

“SIR,  
 “I am commanded by his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax, to demand this castle for the use of  
 “the King and Parliament, which I require of  
 “you, and to lay down your arms, and accept  
 “of reasonable propositions, which will be granted  
 “both to you and your soldiers, if you observe  
 “this summons; and further, you are to consider  
 “of what nation and religion you are, for, if you  
 “refuse this summons, you exclude yourself from  
 “mercy, and are to expect for yourself and soldiers, no better than Stinchcombe quarter.\*  
 “I expect your sudden answer; and according  
 “thereunto, shall rest your friend,

“THOMAS MORGAN.”

CHEPSTOWE, October 6, 1645.

*To which Colonel Fitzmorris sent this Answer:*

“SIR,  
 “I have the same reason to keep this castle  
 “for my master the King, as you to demand it  
 “for General Fairfax; and until my reason be  
 “convinced, and my provisions decreased, I shall,  
 “notwithstanding my religion, and menaces of ex-

\*Stinchcombe was a place where the Parliament complained of Prince Rupert, for putting their men to the sword.

“tirpation,

“tirpation, continue in my resolution, and in my  
 “fidelity and loyalty to my King. As to Stinch-  
 “combe quarter, I know not what you mean by  
 “it, nor do depend upon your intelligence for  
 “relief, which in any indigence I assure me of:  
 “and in that assurance I rest, your servant,

“ROBERT FITZMORRIS.”

“What quarter you give me and my foldiers,  
 “I refer to the consideration of all foldiers, when  
 “I am constrained to seek for any.”

Notwithstanding this resolute answer, four days after he surrendered upon articles, himself and his garrison becoming prisoners of war.

From the same authority it appears, that anno 1648; about the beginning of May, this castle was surpris'd by Sir Nicholas Kemish, Mr. Thomas Lewis, and other active royalists, who, in the absence of the governor, Colonel Hewes, by means of a correspondence with some in the castle, in the night obtained possession of a port; when notwithstanding one Cautrell, an officer of the garrison, with some soldiers, retreated to a tower, where they for a while attempted a defence, it was taken, and Captain Herbert, with the garrison, made prisoners.

Colonel

Colonel Herbert having intelligence thereof, presently assembled some forces in order to recover it, and CROMWELL marched against it in person, thinking to have taken it by storm; he soon got possession of the town, but unsuccessfully assaulted the castle, whereupon he left Colonel Ewer, with a train of artillery, seven companies of foot, and four troops of horse, to prosecute the siege; when, though the garrison consisted of only one hundred and sixty men, they gallantly defended themselves till their provisions were exhausted, and even then refused to surrender on assurance of quarter, hoping to escape by means of a boat; but in this they were prevented by the intrepidity of a soldier in the parliamentary army, who swimming across the river with a knife in his teeth, cut loose and brought away the boat; at length, on the 25th of May, the castle was taken. Sir Nicholas Kemish and about forty men were slain in the siege. This was considered by the parliament of such importance, that the captain who brought the news was rewarded with 50*l.* and the parliament directed, that a letter of thanks should be drawn up, and sent from that house to Colonel Ewer, and the officers and soldiers employed on that service.

Anno

Anno 1659, here was a royal garrison, on the following establishment, *per day*:

|                                             | £ | s | d  |
|---------------------------------------------|---|---|----|
| Governor, besides captain's pay -           | 0 | 2 | 0  |
| A gunner, at - - - -                        | 0 | 1 | 8  |
| A mattraffe, at - - - -                     | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Fire and candle for the guard -             | 0 | 0 | 8  |
| A company of foot, consisting of a captain, |   |   |    |
| at - - - -                                  | 0 | 8 | 0  |
| A lieutenant, at - - - -                    | 0 | 4 | 0  |
| Two sergeants, 1s. 6d. each -               | 0 | 3 | 0  |
| Three corporals and one drum, 1s. each      | 0 | 4 | 0  |
| Sixty-two soldiers at 8d. each -            | 2 | 1 | 4  |

£ 3 5 6

## HENRY MARTEN.

*The following Particulars of this Character, rendered memorable from having been one of the Judges of KING CHARLES I. is here inserted, for the information of the Reader.*

HENRY MARTEN, commonly called *Harry Marten*, was born at Oxford, where his Father, Sir Henry Marten, then lived, a Doctor of Civil Law, successively Judge of the Admiralty, and Dean of the Arches; and, in 1624, Judge of the Prerogative; and 1628, served in Parliament as a Burgess for the university of Oxford. Henry, at fifteen, was entered a Gentlemen Commoner of University College; where, giving proofs of pregnant Parts, had the degree of A. B. conferred on him in the Year 1619. He afterwards went into one of the Inns of Court, and then travelled into France. In the Year 1640, before the Death of his Father, who was Lord of the Manor of Longworth, and possessed considerable Estates

in

in Berkshire, he was elected one of the Knights in Parliament for that County; and in the War that soon after desolated the Kingdom, he sided with the Parliament; and when the King was vanquished, and brought to Trial, Harry Marten sat as one of his Judges.

After the Restoration, he was called to an Account; but his Life was spared, because he came in upon the Proclamation of Surrender; yet his estate was sequestered, and himself imprisoned for Life in Chepstow Castle, where he died suddenly, while at Dinner (as reported by Anthony Wood), in the Year 1680, aged *Seventy-eight*, and was buried in the Church of St. Mary, in Chepstow, on the 9th Day of September, 1680. The following is a true Copy of his Epitaph, said to be written by himself, by way of Acrostic, and which was taken from his Tomb-Stone, before the Letters were obliterated by people constantly walking over it; and which I well remember to have seen lie flat on the Ground in the narrow Passage leading from the Middle Aile into the North Aile, and exactly opposite to the Reading Desk.

HERE SEPTEMBER THE NINTH  
 WAS BURIED  
 A TRUE ENGLISHMAN.

Who, in BERKSHIRE, was well known  
 To love his country's freedom 'bove his own ;  
 But being immured full twenty year,  
 Had time to write, as doth appear,

HIS EPITAPH.

H ere or elsewhere (all's one to you—to me)  
 E arth, air, or water, gripes my ghostly dust,  
 N one knows how soon to be by fire set free:  
 R eader, if you an oft-try'd rule will trust,  
 Y ou'll gladly do and suffer what you must.  
 M y time was spent in serving you and you,  
 A nd death's my pay, it seems, and welcome too :  
 R evenge destroying but itself, while I  
 T o birds of prey leave my old cage and fly.  
 E xamples preach to the eye,—Care then mine says,  
 N ot how you end, but how you spend, your days.

NOTE, from " The Guide to CHEPSTOW, &c. by Water."

SOME years afterwards, a clergyman succeeded to the living of Chepstow, who (probably with more zeal than humanity) ordered Marten's corpse to be taken up from the place of its interment, and deposited in some obscure part of the chancel, declaring, "That the church, of which he had the care, should *not be disgraced by the body of a Regicide*:" which order was accordingly obeyed.

But to mark how careful the best of us ought to be in giving way to political animosity, however sincere in our good wishes,---at the death of the above clergyman, a most severe epitaph was given about,---his *name* affording opportunity to pun with---and which has been shewn to the Writer: but honoured as he has been with such marks of kindness from many families in Chepstow, he would be sorry in wounding the feelings of a relative by the publication. It is the characteristic of a great mind to dwell with pleasure upon virtues, and where vices appear to draw a veil over them.\*

Lord

\* DR. JOHNSON, in his admirable life of SAVAGE, makes a fine remark. He says, "If misery be the effect of virtue, it ought to be revered---if of ill fortune, to be pitied---and if of vice, not to

Lord Bolingbroke being asked, *How many faults the great Duke of Marlborough had?* calmly replied, *He was truly so great a man he had forgot them all.*

For twenty years of his confinement, Marten was denied the attendance of his family; during which time, an ancestor of Mrs. Williams (who lives in the Castle), and another woman were the persons who waited on him. Afterwards, his *two daughters* were admitted, who continued with him during the remainder of his life.

"to be insulted, because it is perhaps of itself a punishment adequate to the crime by which it was produced: And the humanity of that man can deserve no panegyric, who is capable of reproaching a criminal in the hands of the executioner."

## THE CHURCH,

Was formerly an alien priory, of Benedictine monks, to the abbey of Corneil, in Normandy, as early as K. Stephen's reign. It was dedicated to St. Mary, and seized by the Crown, but restored to Henry IV. Edward IV. in 2d year of his reign, granted it to the college called God's House, in Cambridge; but that grant seems not to have taken effect, because \* here was a priory till the Dissolution, when it had three Religious, and was valued, according to Dugdale, at 32l. per annum, and to Speed at 32l. 4s. per annum,

\* Though there is a place not far from Chepstow named Strigal, yet the monasteries of Strigule and Chepstow seem to have been the same; for that in the ancient valuations where Strigule is valued, there is no mention of Chepstow; and in the late valuations where Chepstow is valued, there is no mention of Strigule. Nor is there any mention of Chepstow amongst all the donations to Corneil; but Striguil with its appurtenances, is thereto given. The founder of Tintern Abbey is called, in Leland's Itinerary, "Dom. de Stroghil alias Chepstow." And I am informed that Chepstow is called Striguile in old writings, and that the manor court is held by that name now.

Leland says, This priory was a cell to Bermondsey. But among the reprises in the valuation in the First Fruit's office, there is no rent or pension, by way of acknowledgment, to Bermondsey.

The

The circular arches of the nave, supported by square massive pillars, remain entire within the church; but those of the ancient choir and of the cross ile, are only to be traced by their foundations on the outside of it. The entrance of the West front is by a large and finely proportioned arch of Norman architecture, which is profusely decorated with the receding pillars, and various mouldings, peculiar to that people, and which remains in singular preservation.

The present INCUMBENT is

**THE REVEREND Mr. SEYS.**

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## C A E R W E N T.

*Five Miles from Chepstow,**In the Road from Chepstow to Cardiff, and other Parts  
of South Wales.*


---

THIS was a considerable station in the time of the Romans; it stands on a gentle elevation, and was fortified by that people with a strong wall, inclosing a large square. At present it is a miserable village, and had nothing, till lately, to manifest its former greatness, excepting here and there some long fragments of the ancient walls. The great turnpike road to Cardiff passes through the centre of it.

In the month of July 1777, the servants of Mr. Lewis of Chepstow, on planting an orchard within the south west angle of the old walls, were accidentally interrupted in their work, by their tools striking on the platform of a Mosaic pavement, which lay about two feet below the present surface of the soil.

E

The

The proprietor, Mr. LEWIS, with a laudable spirit, immediately ordered the whole of it to be cleared, and erected a stone building over the pavement, as a security against the idle and plundering curiosity of the common people. By these means all the parts are in the utmost preservation, and, which neglected, the curious might, probably, have heard of the discovery of this singular remain, and of its destruction, at one and the same instant of time.

This pavement is in length 21 feet 6 inches, and in breadth 18 feet 4 inches. A border, edged with the Greek scroll and fret, furrounds the whole; but on the north side, this border is considerably wider (being upwards of three feet) than on the others. This was designed for the purpose of reducing and confining the circles within a regular square. These circles are about three feet in diameter; they are enriched with various and elegant ornaments, and are separated from each other by equal intervals.

The pieces of which the pavement is composed, are nearly square; the breadth of them is about the size of a common die; they consist of the following

following colours, blue, white, yellow, and red; the first and second are of stone, the other two are of terra cotta.

By a judicious mixture of these several colours, the whole pattern is as strongly marked, as it could have been on canvas with oil colours.

The original level is perfectly preserved, and scarcely a stone is missing from it. If we consider this uncommon preservation, added to the exactness and elegance of the composition, I shall not be afraid to assert, that this antiquity need not yield the palm to any tessellated work, that has been discovered either on this or on the other side of the Alpes. In my own opinion, it is equal to those beautiful pavements, which are so carefully preserved in the palace of the king of Naples, at Portici.

It may require some difficulty to ascertain the building, to which this tessellated floor could belong. There were no walls, nor foundation of walls around it. The only visible piece of wall is at the south west angle, which breaks into the pavement, and extends itself about 8 feet along

the south side.\* This is three feet wide, and had so much the appearance of a bank or steps to a bath, that I should have concluded it to have been so, if traces of any other foundations could have supported the conjecture. It might possibly have been the floor of a temple, as we may reasonably consider it as too costly an ornament for a private building.

We may, with less difficulty, perhaps, determine the æra in which this pavement was formed, than the use for which it was formed.

Agricola, according to Tacitus, was the first Roman general, who endeavoured to soften the manners of the Britains, by the introduction of baths, temples, porticos, and other luxurious elegances, and he probably gained more by these arts over the minds of our rude ancestors than by his sword.

Agricola commanded in Britain during the reign of the Emperor Titus, and about five or six years

\* This wall was, perhaps, erected some centuries after the pavement lay concealed in rubbish, and the builder of it might not have had the curiosity of pursuing the tessellated work, part of which he destroyed, in digging the foundations for it.

during

ing that of Domitian. In that period, the polite arts were in their flourishing state, and as we cannot conceive that this antiquity could take its rise, at a time when those arts became degenerated, we may naturally conclude, that the age of it may be dated from between the years of Christ 79 and 86.

The country around CAERWENT is pleasantly enclosed, and towards CAERLEON the views are extensive and fine.

N, B. Several pavements have at different periods been discovered at CAERWENT, and a representation of part of one, something similar to the above described, is given in the fifth volume of the *Archeologia*, page 58.

*Wyndham's Tour thro' M.shire and Wales. 1781.*



PLEASING AND INTERESTING  
DESCRIPTION AND COMPARISON  
OF THE RIVERS

*SEVERN and WYE,*  
*Which add so much to the Beauty and Advantage of*  
*this Part of the Kingdom.*

---

SEVERN.

This noble river, called by the Britons Havren, the Romans Sabrina, and the English Severn, rises out of a high mountain in Montgomeryshire, called Plinlimmon; after having received the waters of seven small streams, it enters Shropshire, and being joined by several brooks, at length reaches Welch Pool; being in the space of 20 miles, become from a slender silver stream, a very deep and copious river, and is navigable from thence to its mouth. From Welch Pool it proceeds by the splendid and populous town of Shrewsbury, then runs south-east to Bridgenorth; and from thence declining still more to the south,

enters

enters Worcestershire, and proceeds to Bewdley. Swelled with concurring streams, it traverses this county entirely, and having watered, amongst others, Worcester and Upton, it passes forward to Gloucestershire, and rolls to Tewksbury; from whence, having visited the city and capital of that county, it travels forward, and meeting still with fresh accessions of waters, grows to such a size, as to be stiled the Severn Sea, pouring its tide, after a progress of more than 130 miles, into the Bristol Channel

### W Y E.

This river makes but an inconsiderable figure in comparison with the Severn. It rises on Plimlimmon hill, and running S. E. divides the counties of Radnor and Brecknock; then crosses Herefordshire, passes by Hereford, and turning directly S. runs by Ross and Monmouth, and falls into the mouth of the Severn below Chepstow.

IT is a singular circumstance, that within a quarter of a mile of the well-head of the Wye, arises the Severn. The two springs are nearly alike: but the fortunes of rivers, like those of men, are owing to various little circumstances, of which

which they take the advantage in the early part of their course. The Severn meeting with a track of ground, rising on the right, soon after it leaves Plinlimmon, receives a push towards the north-east. In this direction it continues its course to Shrewsbury. There it meets another obstruction, which turns it as far to the south-east. Afterwards still meeting with favourable opportunities, it successfully improves them; enlarging its circle; sweeping from one country to another; receiving large accessions every where of wealth and grandeur; till at length with a full tide, it enters the ocean as an arm of the sea.

- In the mean time the WYE, meeting with no particular opportunities of any consequence to improve its fortunes, never makes any figure as a capital river; and at length becomes subservient to that very Severn, whose birth and early setting out in life, were exactly similar to its own.

Between these two rivers is comprehended a district, consisting of great part of the counties of Montgomery, Radnor, Salop, Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester. Of the last county, merely that beautiful portion is inclosed which forms the forest of Dean.

---

## BEACHLEY.

THE OLD PASSAGE.

IS about three miles from Chepstow, the road leading through an agreeable neck of land, washed on each side either by the Severn or the Wye.

The house is pleasantly situated on the Beach, and commands a fine view of the opposite country, whose numerous villages, greatly enhance the beauty of the scene.

Within these few months the proprietor, Mr. Rogers, has fitted up the house in the most elegant manner, and made such improvements, as must undoubtedly reward him, as well as please the traveller.

The passage house on the opposite shore is called AUST, or AUST CLIVE: and is distant about eleven miles from BRISTOL.

The road from hence communicating with that which leads from the NEW PASSAGE, about a mile and a half from AUST, a sketch of it will be given from the former place to Bristol.



## THE NEW PASSAGE.

[*So called, to DISTINGUISH it from that above.*]

IS distant about five miles from Chepstow: on the right is a fine view of Caldicot castle, which is the shell of an old Norman fortress, but presents nothing curious in its remains.

This house is equally pleasantly situated, and commands nearly the same views, as the house above.

Since the establishment of a mail coach,\* from London to Milford Haven, (which passes through Swansea, and the most beautiful parts of South Wales), and of the packets from thence to Cork and Waterford, this place has become of considerable note.

\* What person that has seen a Continent Diligence, but must smile at the comparison of it with one of our Mail Coaches? A vehicle as large as a broad-wheel waggon, with seats all round for 8 inside passengers, [PRETTY GENTLEMEN with their HEADS in NIGHT CAPS, and tied with coloured ribbons]; drawn by 6 or 8 heavy black stallions, such as are used in the drays in London, with 2 postilions, smacking their whips all the way they go; moving at the rate of 5 miles an hour! This very elegant carriage was formerly dignified (according to the pompous fashion of the French), with the title of the *POSTE ROYALE*.

To

To Mr. PALMER many parts of the kingdom are indebted (and none more than South Wales), for the daily and speedy intercourse opened with the metropolis by his plan. At this place, every attention is paid to the Mail passengers. As soon as the coach arrives, a light sailing boat is ready, to convey them to the opposite shore; and if it proves calm weather, they are rowed over. The Bristol mail is brought down to the landing place, when the company are taken up, and the coach proceeds on its journey, without the smallest loss of time.

*For want of proper knowledge when to pass, many people suffer great delay at these houses; the following information may, in general, prevent the inconvenience.*

Endeavour to learn when it is *high water* at the passage you mean to cross at, and if you are there *half an hour* [better an hour] *before that time*, you are certain of going over.

*The above was told me by the Master of the boats.*

The Mail Coach from Milford and Swansea arrives at the New Passage every morning, about 10 o'clock, and at Bristol at 2 in the afternoon.

*Leaves Bristol every afternoon at half past two.*

*Mr. GILPIN*

*Having included this place in his TOUR, any remark from his pen is too valuable to be omitted.*

FROM Newport as we approached the passage over the Bristol Channel, the views of it became still more interesting. On the right, we left the magnificent ruins of Caldicot castle; and arrived at the ferry-house, about three in the afternoon, where we were so fortunate as to find the boat preparing to set sail. It had attempted to cross at high water, in the morning: but after toiling three hours against the wind, it was obliged to put back. This afforded another opportunity, when the water was at ebb: for the boat can pass only at the two extremes of the tide.

We had scarce alighted at the ferry-house, when we heard the boatman winding his horn from the beach, about a quarter of a mile below, as a signal to bring down the horses. When they were all embarked, the horn sounded again for the passengers. A very multifarious company assembled; and a miserable walk we had to the boat through sludge; and over shelving and slippery

slippery rocks. When we got to it, we found eleven horses on board, and above thirty people; and our chaise (which we had intended to convert into a cabin during the voyage) flung into the shrouds.

The tides are uncommonly rapid in this channel; and when a brisk wind happens to blow in a contrary direction, the waters are very rough. The boats too are often ill-managed; for what is done repeatedly is often done carelessly. A British admiral, I have heard, who had lived much at sea, riding up to one of these ferries, with an intention to pass over, and observing the boat, as she was working across the Channel from the other side, he declared he durst not trust himself to the seamanship of such fellows as managed her; and turning his horse, went round by Gloucester.\*

A gentleman gave me the following account of the loss of an open boat, in this passage, from the obstinacy of a passenger.

\* That's not a bad story. The country was a few years ago amused with LEE SHORES, and of an admiral waiting till the next morning to fight his adversary :---we presume this COURAGEOUS sailor was an officer of that school. Had he SWAM HIS HORSE ACROSS, instead of turning from it, what a capital figure he would have made in anecdote!

Sudden exclamation of a Stranger who took up Gilpin in my house.

The

The wind was rough, and a person on board lost his hat; which floated away in a contrary direction. He begged the waterman to turn round to recover it; but the waterman told him, it was as much as their lives were worth to attempt it. On which the passenger, who seemed to be a tradesman, started up, seized the helm, and swore the fellow should return. In the struggle the helm got a wrong twist, and the boat instantly filled and went to the bottom. It appeared afterwards that the hat was a hat of value; for the owner had secreted several bills in the lining of it.

For ourselves, however, we found the passage only a disagreeable one: and if there was any danger, we saw it not.

As our chaise could not be landed till the tide flowed up the beach, we were obliged to wait at the ferry house. Our windows overlooked the channel, and the Welsh-coast, which seen from a higher stand, became now a woody and beautiful distance.

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From

From the Ferry House to Bristol, the views are amusing. The first scene presented to us, was a spacious lawn, about a mile in diameter, the area of which was flat; and the boundary a grand, woody bank; adorned with towers and villas, standing either boldly near the top; or seated in woody recesses near the bottom.

When we left the plain, the road carried us into shady lanes, winding round woody eminences; one of which was crowned with an artificial castle. The castle indeed, which consisted of one tower, might have been better imagined: the effect however was good, tho' the object was paltry.

About three miles on this side of Bristol, we had a grand view of rising country. It consisted of a pleasing mixture of wood, and lawn: the parts were large: and the houses and villages scattered in good proportion. The whole when we saw it, was overspread with a purplish tint, which, as the objects were so near, we could not account for; but it united all the parts together in very pleasing harmony.

The approach to Bristol is grand; and the environs every where shew the neighbourhood of an opulent city; tho' the city itself lay concealed, till  
we

we entered it. For a considerable way, the road led between stone walls, which bounded the fields on each side. This boundary, tho' of all others the most unpleasing, is yet proper as you approach a great town: it is a kind of connecting thread.

The narrowness of the port of Bristol, which is formed by the banks of the river, is very striking. it might be called a dry harbour, notwithstanding the river: for the vessels, when the tide ebbs, lie on an ouzy bed, in a deep channel. The returning tide lifts them to the height of the wharfs. It exhibits of course none of those beautiful winding shores, which often adorn an estuary. The PORT of BRISTOL was probably first formed, when vessels, afraid of being cut from their harbours by corsairs, ran up high into the country for security.

The country around BRISTOL is beautiful; tho' we had not time to examine it. The scenery about the Hot-wells is in a great degree picturesque. The river is cooped between two high hills; both of which are adorned with a rich profusion of rock, wood, and verdure. Between these hills stands the pump-room, close to the river; and every ship, that sails into Bristol, sails under its windows.

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Mr. *SHIERCLIFFE*,

BOOKSELLER, BRISTOL,

*Having published an excellent account of whatever is worth the stranger's notice in that city, we would not attempt a task which he has executed so well; but refer the traveller to the Book, which will amply inform his curiosity.*

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*We return again to **CHEPSTOW**, in order to accompany the Traveller*

*From thence to **GLOCESTER**.*

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WE now took the Gloucester road, over the lofty bridge at Chepstow, whose planks, on which our horses hoofs resounded, are contrived to escape the violence of floods, by floating in a limited space; but this rarely happens at so immense an height as 70 feet. From the hill beyond, we command a delightful view of the town and castle. Continuing thro' several small  
G
villages,

villages, the wide Severn rolling on our right, we came to Lidney Park, a good old seat of one of the Bathurst family, situate on the edge of

### *THE FOREST OF DEAN.*

This Forest either obtained its name from Dean a market a town, lowly situated within its limits, (which word is of Saxon origin, signifying a dale or woody valley, whence probably comes the word *den* in English), or else from Arden, by rejecting the first syllable, which the Gauls and Britains formerly used for a wood. It was formerly so thick with trees, and so dark and terrible in its shades and by-ways, that it rendered the inhabitants barbarous, and emboldened them to commit many outrages.

The soil is various, but mostly favourable to the growth of the oak, which was once so considerable that it is said to have been part of the instructions of the Spanish Armada to destroy it, but of late years the numerous iron furnaces hereabouts have much destroyed it. The whole Forest of more than 23,520 acres, which is extra parochial, is divided into six walks, or parts, known by their respective Lodges; viz. King's Lodge, York Lodge, Worcester

Worcester Lodge, Danby Lodge, Herbert Lodge, and Latimer Lodge. St. Briavel's Castle, which was once very strong and large, but is now in ruins, gives name to one of the Hundreds, and serves chiefly as a prison for offenders against the laws of the forest. The privileges are very extensive; the free miners claim a right of digging iron ore, and coal; also to cut timber necessary to carry on their works. A gold mine was discovered in the year 1700, at a village called TAYNTON, on the northern borders of the forest, of which a lease was granted to some refiners, who extracted some gold from the ore, but did not continue the work, the quantity of gold being so small as not to answer the expence of separation.

A little beyond we passed the village of Lidney, and another iron furnace belonging to T. and R. *Pidcock*, Esquires, of the *Platts*, near Stourbridge, Worcestershire. A long spout supported by pillars across the road, conveys water from the opposite hill to move the great wheel of these works. The next ascent on this road commands a most delightful view over this handsome spire, down the liquid expanse of Severn, many miles.

Sir John Winter, during the civil war in Charles the first's time, garrisoned his house at Lidney, for the king; from whence, in conjunction with Lord Herbert, who commanded for the king about Monmouth and Ragland, he frequently alarmed Massey, the governor of Gloucester; but after the blockade of that city was raised by the Earl of Effex, the King's affairs daily declined in Gloucestershire, and Sir John was driven from his house at Lidney, and being closely pursued by Cromwell's Troops over Tidenham Chace, he was, in order to save himself, compelled to ride down the Lancot cliffs, and being at that time high water in the Wye, he crossed over on horse-back into Monmouthshire, and thus miraculously effected his escape. He returned to Lidney after this, demolished his house there as not tenable, and joined the King's army, until the battle of Naseby, which gave the finishing stroke to the King's affairs.

*From LIDNEY,*

The roads became steep and rough to a great degree; nothing but some pleasant views towards the water could make them bearable. Herefordshire is in bad repute, and not without reason, for its roads; but compared with this, they are really

really good. We arrived at Newnham to dinner, an ancient small town, pleasingly situated near the river; our inn, the Bear, stands close to the passage to Newport, and all the great roads to Bath, Bristol, &c. From hence we enjoyed a pleasing view of the opposite hills, Bird-lip, Robin Hood, and those about Ruxmore, in the cloathing country.

In the evening, which was very fine, we pursued our course thro' Westbury, so large a parish in Camden's time, as to be reputed above 20 miles in compass; here we saw a fine stone mansion, with formal old gardens, and pieces of water, belonging to Mr. Colchester, heir of Sir Duncombe Colchester, who married the daughter of Sir John Maynard, Knight, owner of Gunnersbury. The road being now level and excellent, we arrived at GLOCESTER without much further observation. This city was built by the Romans, and made a station to curb the Silures, the bravest and most powerful of all the Britons. It derives its name from *Caer Glow*, which signifies a fair city, a name certainly not now improper, as its four principal streets meeting in the centre are both spacious and well built. Its situation is in  
one

one of the richest vales known, a continuation of the noble Evesham.

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WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY,

*Thus describes it, in his book "De Pontificibus."*

" THE Vale of Gloucester is so called from its  
 " chief city. The soil yields plenty of corn and  
 " fruit (in some places, by the natural richness  
 " of the ground; in others, by the diligence of  
 " the countryman); enough to excite the idlest  
 " person to take pains, when it repays his labour  
 " with the increase of an hundred fold.

" Here you may behold high-ways and public  
 " roads full of fruit trees, not planted, but grow-  
 " ing naturally. The earth bears fruit of its own  
 " accord, much exceeding others both in taste and  
 " beauty, many sorts of which continue fresh the  
 " year round, and serve the owner till he is sup-  
 " plied by a new increase.

" No county in England has so many or so good  
 " vineyards as this: either for fertility, or the  
 " sweetness of the grape. The vine has in it no un-  
 " pleasant tartness or eagerness; and is little inferior

" to

“ to the French in sweetnefs. The villages are  
 “ very thick, the churches handsome, and the  
 “ towns populous and many.” In a fimilar strain  
 he continues his praise of the noble river the Se-  
 vern, “ than which there is not any in the land  
 that has a broader channel, fwifter stream, or  
 greater plenty of fish,” &c. These vineyards have  
 nothing left but the places named from them;  
 viz. one on a hill by Overbridge near Glocester,  
 and another near Tewkesbury.

[*Thus far the sensible and entertaining Mr. Shaw.*]

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## OBJECTS

*Worthy the Stranger's Notice, at Glocester.*

*The Cathedral.*

(*Esteemed one of the best pieces of Architecture in the  
 kingdom.*)

*In which, among many other monuments, that to the  
 memory of Mrs. Morley should be seen.*

*The New County Gaol.*

*A most extensive and superb building.*

*The four fine Streets;*

*Called East, West, North, and South, Gates.*

---

## FINIS,

to the French in 1266. The villages are

---

towns populous and many. In a similar strain  
he continues his tale of the noble river the Se-  
vern, "than any in the land."

*Just Published,*

(According to the Plan of this Part)

Price Two Shillings, neatly done up in Blue Paper,

*A Descriptive Account of Tintern Abbey.*

one on a hill by Overbridge near Gloucester,  
and another near Tewkesbury.

[This for the reader and entertaining Mr. Shaw.]

---

Also, preparing for publication,

*A Descriptive Account of Ragland Castle;*

From new materials, and local information.

To which will be added,

*Abergavenny Castle, &c. &c.*

In which, among many other monuments, that to the  
memory of Mrs. Anne, Countess of Devon.

By CHARLES HEATH, Printer, Monmouth.

The New County Gaol.

A most extensive and superb building.

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